What is claimed is:

1   1.   An instant messaging or chat (IM/chat) communication method comprising the

2   steps of:

3   inserting in an instant message (IM) a voice conference identifier comprising a

4   voice conference call list identifying conference call nodes;

5   transmitting said IM to a recipient at a recipient node, wherein responsive to said

6   recipient selecting said voice conference identifier, a voice conference call between

7   selected ones of said identified conference call nodes is established.

1   2.   The IM/chat communication method of claim 1, wherein said conference call is

2   established using Voice over IP (VoIP) based voice communications links.

1   3.   The IM/chat communication method of claim 1, wherein said conference call is

2   established using telephony-based voice communications links over a public switched

3   telephone network (PSTN).

1   4.   The IM/chat communication method of claim 1, wherein said voice conference

2   call list specifies telephone numbers for said identified conference call nodes.

1   5.   The IM/chat communication method of claim 1, wherein said voice conference

2   call list specifies IP addresses for said identified conference call nodes.

1   6.   The IM/chat communication method of claim 1, said inserting step further

2   comprising:

3   inserting in said IM/chat message a selectable symbol for initiating said voice

4   conference call with said selected ones of said identified conference call nodes.

1   7.   The IM/chat communication method of claim 1, said inserting step further

2   comprising:

3   inserting in said IM/chat message a plurality of selectable symbols, each said

4   symbol for initiating a voice communications link with a selected one of said identified

5   conference call nodes.

1   8.   The IM/chat communication method of claim 1, said inserting step further

2   comprising:

3   embedding computer program code in said IM/chat message, wherein said

4   computer program code is configured to establish a plurality of voice communications

5   links between said selected ones of said identified conference call nodes thereby

6   establishing said conference call.

1   9.   An instant messaging or chat (IM/chat) communication method comprising the

2   steps of:

3   detecting a voice conference identifier comprising a voice conference call list

4   identifying conference call nodes in an IM/chat message received by a recipient at a

5   recipient node;

6   responsive to detecting said voice conference identifier, displaying at least one

7   selectable icon; and

8   responsive to a selection of said at least one selectable icon, establishing a voice

9   conference call between selected ones of said identified conference call nodes.

1   10.   The IM/chat communication method of claim 9, wherein said displaying step

2   displays a single icon and said establishing step establishes said voice conference call

3   between said selected ones of said identified conference call nodes responsive to said

4   selection of said single icon.

1 11. The IM/chat communication method of claim 9, wherein said displaying step

2 displays a plurality of icons, each said icon corresponding to one of said voice

3 conference call nodes, and wherein said establishing step establishes a voice

4 communications link with said selected ones of said conference call nodes responsive

5 to said selection of corresponding ones of said plurality of icons.

1 12. The IM/chat communication method of claim 9, said establishing step further

2 comprising:

3   extracting from said IM embedded computer program code configured to

4 establish said voice conference call between said selected ones of said identified

5 conference call nodes; and

6   responsive to said selection of said at least one icon, executing said embedded

7 computer program code in order to establish said voice conference call.

1 13. The IM/chat communication method of claim 9, wherein said voice conference

2 call list includes telephone numbers for said identified conference call nodes.

1 14. The IM/chat communication method of claim 9, wherein said voice conference

2 call list includes IP addresses for said identified conference call nodes.

1 15. The IM/chat communication method of claim 9, wherein said voice conference

2 call is established using Voice over IP (VoIP) based voice communications links.

1 16. The IM/chat communication method of claim 9, wherein said voice conference

2 call is established using telephony-based voice communications links over a public

3 switched telephone network (PSTN).

1 17. The IM/chat communication method of claim 9, said establishing step further

2 comprising:

3   responsive to said selection of said at least one icon, determining a telephone

4   number or an IP address for said selected ones of said identified conference call nodes

5   based on said voice conference call list.

1   18.   An instant message comprising:

2   header information, said header information identifying a sending node and a

3   recipient node;

4   a message portion, said message portion displaying content from said sending

5   node to said recipient node; and

6   a voice conference identifier comprising a voice conference call list specifying

7   conference call nodes to be connected via a voice conference call, wherein said

8   recipient node is a conference call node.

1   19.   The instant message of claim 18, further comprising:

2   embedded computer program code, wherein said computer program code is

3   configured to establish a plurality of voice communications links between selected ones

4   of said specified conference call nodes thereby establishing said conference call.

1   20.   A machine readable storage having stored thereon a computer program having a

2   plurality of code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform

3   the steps of:

4   inserting in an instant message (IM) a voice conference identifier comprising a

5   voice conference call list identifying conference call nodes;

6   transmitting said IM to a recipient at a recipient node, wherein responsive to said

7   recipient selecting said voice conference identifier, a voice conference call between

8   selected ones of said identified conference call nodes is established.

1   21.   The machine readable storage of claim 20, wherein said conference call is

2   established using a Voice over IP (VoIP) based voice communications links.

1   22.   The machine readable storage of claim 20, wherein said conference call is

2   established using telephony-based voice communications links over a public switched

3   telephone network (PSTN).

1   23.   The machine readable storage of claim 20, wherein said voice conference call

2   list specifies telephone numbers for said identified conference call nodes.

1   24.   The machine readable storage of claim 20, wherein said voice conference call

2   list specifies IP addresses for said identified conference call nodes.

1   25.   The machine readable storage of claim 20, said inserting step further

2   comprising:

3   inserting in said IM a selectable symbol for initiating said voice conference call

4   with said selected ones of said identified conference call nodes.

1   26.   The machine readable storage of claim 20, said inserting step further

2   comprising:

3   inserting in said IM a plurality of selectable symbols, each said symbol for

4   initiating a voice communications link with said selected ones of said identified

5   conference call nodes.

1   27.   The machine readable storage of claim 20, said inserting step further

2   comprising:

3   embedding computer program code in said IM, wherein said computer program

4   code is configured to establish a plurality of voice communications links between said

5   selected ones of said identified conference call nodes thereby establishing said

6   conference call.

1 28. A machine readable storage having stored thereon a computer program having a

2 plurality of code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform

3 the steps of:

4 detecting a voice conference identifier comprising a voice conference call list

5 identifying conference call nodes in an instant message (IM) received by a recipient at a

6 recipient node;

7 responsive to detecting said voice conference identifier, displaying at least one

8 selectable icon; and

9 responsive to a selection of said at least one selectable icon, establishing a voice

10 conference call between selected ones of said identified conference call nodes.

1 29. The machine readable storage of claim 28, wherein said displaying step displays

2 a single icon and said establishing step establishes said voice conference call between

3 said selected ones of said identified conference call nodes responsive to said selection

4 of said single icon.

1 30. The machine readable storage of claim 28, wherein said displaying step displays

2 a plurality of icons, each said icon corresponding to one of said voice conference call

3 nodes, and wherein said establishing step establishes a voice communications link with

4 said selected ones of said conference call nodes responsive to said selection of

5 corresponding ones of said plurality of icons.

1 31. The machine readable storage of claim 28, said establishing step further

2 comprising:

3 extracting from said IM embedded computer program code configured to

4 establish said voice conference call between said selected ones of said identified

5 conference call nodes; and

6 responsive to said selection of said at least one icon, executing said embedded

7 computer program code in order to establish said voice conference call.

1   32.   The machine readable storage of claim 28, wherein said voice conference call

2   list includes telephone numbers for said identified conference call nodes.

1   33.   The machine readable storage of claim 28, wherein said voice conference call

2   list includes IP addresses for said identified conference call nodes.

1   34.   The machine readable storage of claim 28, wherein said voice conference call is

2   established using Voice over IP (VoIP) based voice communications links.

1   35.   The machine readable storage of claim 28, wherein said voice conference call is

2   established using telephony-based voice communications links over a public switched

3   telephone network (PSTN).

1   36.   The machine readable storage of claim 28, said establishing step further

2   comprising:

3   responsive to said recipient selecting said at least one icon, determining a

4   telephone number or an IP address for said selected ones of said identified conference

5   call nodes based on said voice conference call list.

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1   37.   An instant messaging or chat session client comprising:

2   a conventional IM processor, said conventional IM processor extracting and

3   displaying message text encapsulated in a received IM; and,

4   a voice conference processor, said voice conference processor identifying a

5   voice conference identifier encapsulated in said received IM, displaying at least one

6   selectable icon in response to detecting said voice conference identifier, and

7   responsive to a selection of said at least one selectable icon, establishing a voice

8   conference call between selected conference call nodes specified by said voice

9   conference identifier.